



OCEAN DUMPING AND DREDGED MATERIAL MANAGEMENT

There are two primary federal environmental statutes governing **dredged material** disposal:

- The Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA, also called the Ocean Dumping Act) governs transportation for the purpose of disposal into ocean waters.
- The Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 governs discharge of dredged or fill material into U.S. coastal and inland waters.

EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers share responsibility for regulation of **dredged material**:

- The Corps issues permits under the CWA and MPRSA.
- EPA has the lead for establishing environmental guidelines/criteria that must be met to receive a permit under either statute.
- Permits for ocean dumping of dredged material are subject to EPA review and concurrence. CWA permits for dredged material discharge are subject to EPA review and veto, if EPA's environmental guidelines are not met.
- EPA is responsible for identifying recommended ocean disposal sites.
- EPA and the Corps are jointly responsible for management and monitoring of ocean disposal sites.

In 1972, Congress enacted the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA), also known as the Ocean Dumping Act, to prohibit the ocean dumping of material that would unreasonably degrade or endanger human health or the marine environment.

WHAT TYPE OF MATERIAL IS PERMITTED TO BE DUMPED INTO THE OCEAN?

- Virtually all material ocean dumped is uncontaminated dredged material (sediment) removed from the bottom of waterbodies to maintain navigation channels and docks.
- Other materials that are dumped include vessels, fish wastes, and human remains.



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HOW IS OCEAN DUMPING REGULATED?

- Ocean dumping cannot occur unless a permit is issued under the MPRSA.
- In the case of dredged material, the decision to issue a permit is made by the Army Corps of Engineers, using EPA's environmental criteria and subject to EPA's concurrence.
- For all other materials, EPA is the permitting agency.
- EPA is also responsible for designating ocean dumping sites for all types of materials.

HOW ARE MATERIALS EVALUATED FOR OCEAN DUMPING?

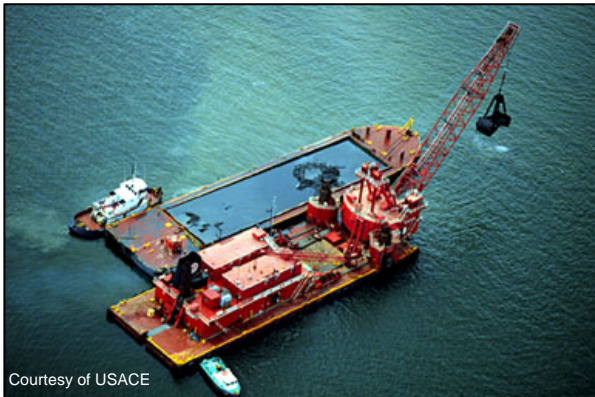
- EPA's ocean dumping criteria require consideration of environmental impact of the dumping; the need for the dumping; the effect of the dumping on aesthetic, recreational, or economic values; and the adverse effects of the dumping on other uses of the ocean.
- Dredged materials, as well as other materials proposed for ocean disposal, must undergo a series of tests and evaluations to determine whether they meet EPA's environmental criteria for ocean dumping.
- The testing and evaluation procedures are designed to protect against toxicity and bioaccumulation that may adversely impact the marine environment or human health, and to produce information about the potential for these effects efficiently and reliably.

- No permit may be issued unless there is enough information to make a scientifically sound determination that the ocean dumping will not unreasonably degrade human health or the environment.



HOW ARE OCEAN DUMPING SITES MANAGED AND MONITORED?

- Ocean dredged material disposal sites are required to have a site management and monitoring plan.
- Management of ocean dumping sites involves regulating the times, quantity, and characteristics of material dumped at the site, and establishing disposal controls, conditions, and requirements to avoid or minimize potential impacts to the marine environment.
- Sites are monitored to ensure that dumping will not unreasonably degrade or endanger human health or the environment, to verify that unanticipated adverse effects are not occurring from past or continued use of the site, and to ensure that permit terms are met.
- EPA's Ocean Survey Vessel *Bold* assists in identifying appropriate locations for ocean dump sites and in monitoring the impacts of regulated dumping at those sites.



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HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF DREDGED MATERIAL DUMPED IN THE OCEAN?

- Decreasing the amount of material produced is one approach. For example, sediment managers and watershed managers can coordinate to control sediment erosion and movement in a watershed to decrease the amount of sedimentation in navigation channels.
- Removing the need for disposal is another approach. Dredged material is a valuable resource that can be used for a variety of beneficial uses, including wetland restoration, beach nourishment, shoreline construction, and habitat creation.

HOW CAN I OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION?

- Visit our website at www.epa.gov/owow/oceans/regulatory/dumpedredged/dumpedredged.html.
- Contact the Oceans and Coastal Protection Division at 202-566-1200.